



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter

1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)



1st Edition, Issue 1 ~ 1 June – 1 July 2005

Families, friends and fellow soldiers of the Phoenix Battalion:

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. It is our Battalion Commander's intent that this newsletter be published no less than monthly and contains as much information as possible. In this initial issue, we will highlight the Battalion's leadership so that you know who will be leading your loved ones into Iraq, talk about the new battalion crest and then we will take a look at some notes from the Battalion Operations Officer MAJ Patton that include a look forward at training dates all the way up to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

The 1st Special Troops Battalion has been blessed with a committed, experienced and relentless command group.

The Battalion Commander, LTC John Cross returned to Fort Hood to take



From left to right: LTC Cross, MAJ Etzkorn and MAJ Patton command of the 1st Special Troops Battalion on the 3rd of June after spending 3 years stationed in Germany training other services and other nation's armies in Africa and Europe. During his last tour on Fort Hood, he served for three years as the Operations Officer and later the Executive Officer for the 299th Engineer Battalion.

The Executive Officer, MAJ Philip Etzkorn, commanded two companies on Fort Hood between March 1998 and June 2002. After command, MAJ Etzkorn reported to Germany where he served as an Observer Controller at CMTC. Upon completion of his duty in Germany, he attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS, before he was then assigned to the 1st STB.

The Battalion Operations Officer, MAJ Thomas Patton is serving in the 4th ID for the third time. He was a member of the division in 1996 when it re flagged from the 2nd AD and he commanded Alpha Company 4th Engineers at Fort Carson in 2000/2001. After a tour at the National Training Center, MAJ Patton also graduated from Command and General Staff College prior to being assigned to the 1st STB.

The Command Sergeant Major, Larry A. Seaman (not pictured), came to Fort Hood from a light fighter background at Fort Bragg, NC. He arrived on station and assumed responsibility for the 299th Engineer Battalion in April 04 and pushed the battalion through its transition to the new Unit of Action. As the last Proven Pioneer CSM and the first Phoenix CSM he has been the battalion's guiding hand and the rock that we stand upon.



The 1st Special Troops Battalion is a brand new unit, with new colors, a new crest and a new mission. The unit crest was designed specifically for the 1st Special Troops Battalion to reflect its expanded mission.



The battalion's new motto, AVDERE EST FACERE (*TO DARE IS TO DO*) is located on the black

scroll across the top. The dark blue in the crest is the color traditionally used by infantry units. The dagger alludes to military ability and readiness; also, suggesting the units designation of the "First Brigade." The oak wreath denotes protection. This, combined with the dagger, focuses on the unit's force protection capabilities. The diagonal square/ diamond shape is associated with daring. The red phoenix, the symbol of the First Brigade, signifies rising to the challenge of training organic units and supplying administrative/logistical support. The star highlights the command and control functions of the unit. The lightning flashes suggest communication's function and gathering of information.

HHC, Hound Dogs!



HHC has been through many changes over the last few months. We have had a change of command and added many new people in leadership positions (pictured above). From left to right: SFC Staub who has been in the unit for about three months and is the Fire Effects Coordinator. SFC Green has been in the unit for a month and is the support platoon sergeant. 2LT Cozart has been in the unit since November 2004 and is originally from Texas. She is the executive officer and the Chemical Recon, FOX, Platoon Leader. SSG Thomas has 12 years service in the Army and came to 1STB in January 2005 as the FOX Platoon Sergeant. SFC Quinn has 13 years service in the Army and came to the 1st STB in November 2004 as the Military Police Platoon Sergeant. He became the 1SG on 1 June and is originally from Illinois. CPT Castillo, Hound Dog Commander, took command in May 2005. He was previously assigned to 1BCT as the Brigade

Chemical Officer. Not pictured is SFC Jones who has 12 years service in the Army. His previous assignment was as a Senior Drill Sergeant at Fort Knox, Kentucky; he is the medical support Platoon Sergeant. SFC Jones is originally from Houston, Texas. Also not pictured is SSG Ochoa. SSG Ochoa has been with the unit since November 2004. He was First Squad Leader and is now the Military Police Platoon Sergeant. The leadership is confident and ready to lead your spouses, sons and daughters through the months ahead.

Notes from the FRG

Hello, My name is Doreen Shafer, I am the FRG Leader for HHC 1STB. My husband is SSG Robert Shafer, Supply SGT, we have two kids Ashley and Justin. I would like to meet all of the spouses and family at our next FRG meeting. The FRG is here to help you with their deployment and while deployed. I hope to meet you at next month's meeting. I'll be letting you know what's going on in the next few months leading to deployment. Hope to see you all soon. Please call me at 539-8979 or email me at doreen.shafer@us.army.mil with any questions.

A Co, Night Hawks!

Greetings to all friends and family of the Phoenix Battalion and the Nighthawks! I am CPT Andy Gilman, commander of Alpha Company, 1st STB. I have commanded this company for eleven months. During this time the Nighthawks have undergone major transformations. We left our roots in the 104th Military Intelligence Battalion and joined the ranks of 299th Engineer Battalion. Just recently, we officially became Alpha Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion as the final step in our transformation.

We have also had many internal changes over the last few months. For starters, the NBC Recon Platoon has moved over to join HHC, 1st STB. We have also had several changes in leadership. 1SG Donald Simmons became the new First Sergeant last month. 1SG Simmons came to us from the Army G2 in Washington, DC and originally hails from Bidor, Texas. Next, 1LT Deshaunda Allen, after serving as an Assistant S2 for the Raider Brigade and as the Prophet Platoon Leader, moved up to become the new Company Executive Officer. 1LT Allen is originally from Dallas, Texas. SFC Ellis Canady, our latest

arrival, is the new Prophet Platoon Sergeant. SFC Canady arrived here from 3rd Military Intelligence Battalion in Korea and is originally from Leesville, Louisiana. Also, next month, our TUAV platoon leader, 1LT Tanya Mack from Bloomington, Indiana, will be replaced by 1LT Aaron Render, the Battalion Intelligence officer. Some things have not changed. Amanda Cuiksa, wife of CPL Kevin Cuiksa, is still our Family Support Group Leader. She has been active as an FRG leader for Alpha Company for two years now and is from the Dallas area of Texas. She works at Sears Portrait Studio, which she is currently using to conduct a fundraiser for the FRG (\$10 for a no sitting fee and a 10x13 picture). She is available to answer any questions you might have about our Family Support Group at (254) 554-3505.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge all of you, our friends and families, and thank you for your continued support for the men and women of the Nighthawks. I am proud to continue serving with the fine soldiers of this company and look forward to the things we will accomplish together over the coming months. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (254) 288-3615.

B Co, Eagles!

Bravo Company has a new Commander. CPT Alfredo Rodriguez took command on June 16. He came to us from the Division's STB and has led from the front from day one. SFC Reuben Tull remains our First Sergeant. He has been in the unit for several years and we hope he'll remain with us. The Executive Officer is 1LT Simpson. Two more Lieutenants are inbound for Platoon Leader positions. Until then our Platoon Sergeants, SSG Robinson, SSG Newton and SFC Gonzalez have it covered.

Welcome SSG Perry, PFC Carrier and PFC Scott. Another new addition to our company is courtesy of SPC Margist. Congratulations on your baby boy! Other birthdays in the Company are SFC Gonzalez (27 July), SGT Torres (8 July), and PFC Faulkner (7 July). July promises to be a very busy month. Thank you all in advance for your hard work.

For all who just completed JNN training, we're glad to have you back. The new sections in the Company have significantly contributed to our success. The EPLRS/ENM section and the SMART-T operators are good soldiers with good work ethics.

Thanks for the support of our families. If you need anything please call the orderly room at 553-1692. You may also call the FRG leader, Deanne Simpson at 698-4820.

Notes from the S3's Desk

Over the next few months, the battalion will continue to train and improve on our key battle tasks. Since the 1st Special Troops Battalion is critical to the success of the 1st Brigade Combat Team it is incorporated into all their training. As a result, we will be very busy during July, August, and September. But because of this, your soldiers will be well prepared for their upcoming deployment. I've highlighted some, but not all, of the training your soldiers will conduct over the next three months. Each company commander can give more details at the company FRG meetings in Aug.

5-15 July: Task Force Lanes. The entire battalion will conduct training here at Ft Hood for the first two weeks in July. We will provide our unique capabilities to brigade as they attack into an enemy controlled area and then interact with a local Arabic speaking civilian population. This event will allow us to build systems for our future operations upon deployment.

18-22 July: Battalion Range Week.

One of the keys to success for any soldier is to be an expert on their assigned weapon. We will train and qualify the battalion on all our weapons during this week. As part of this training, we will fire our weapons using the night vision devices that give us an advantage over any other army in the world. This will require late nights and some early mornings from your soldiers.

4 August: FRG Key Leader Meeting.

Company and Battalion FRG leaders meet and discuss future FRG plans at 1830 in the Battalion Conference Room. Your input is welcome; contact your company FRG leader with ideas.

9 August: A/1st STB Change of Command. Come out and watch your soldiers as they say farewell to CPT Gilman and welcome CPT Bell to the company.

23 August: Battalion Deployment Training and Company FRG Meetings. This training at 1830-2030 in the Ft Hood Volunteer Center is designed for spouses, but soldiers are welcome also. Child care is available for those who would like to use it, but children must be registered with Child and Youth Services, please see your company for assistance.

25 August: Battalion Deployment Training. This is a second opportunity for spouses to receive deployment training at 1300-1500 in the Ft Hood Volunteer Center. Again, child care is available for those who would like to use it. If you cannot attend either of these sessions, then we'll send your soldier to receive information for you. Don't let them forget to give you your packets!

29 August-5 October: National Training Center (NTC). Starting on 29 August select soldiers will deploy ahead of the battalion to Ft Irwin, California to the National Training Center (NTC). The rest of the battalion will follow and by the 5th of September we will be training at Ft Irwin. This is the premier training event prior to our deployment. NTC provides the most realistic training soldiers can receive in the world. We will train against a professional opposing force in an environment that replicates real world situations. By 5 October we will return home as part of the best trained brigade in the Army.

Finally, Karen and I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome you've given me and my family. We are excited to be home at Ft Hood and back with the 4th Infantry Division. We look forward to meeting and working with each of you.

Phoenix!
MAJ Thomas "Dave" Patton
Battalion Operations Officer

Rear Detachment

While deployed to NTC and Iraq the battalion will have a rear detachment on Fort Hood that will serve a number of purposes. The role of the Rear Detachment can be broken down into three general areas. Resource management, Information Management and Relationship management, but first and foremost they will serve as the battalion's link to Fort Hood and operate within the intent of the Commander. The rear detachment will command all troops home on leave and all replacements processing to deploy. The Rear detachment will work with the soldiers and agencies here on Fort Hood to ensure that transitions are smooth and that the unit in Iraq remains ready. We will work to

ensure that all families have the resources they need. The rear detachment will be a hub of information relating to the FRG and the families. We will assist everyone with information as it is available. We will be as forthcoming and honest with everyone as possible. As representatives of the battalion commander and the battalion's link to the rear we will serve the families and develop close relationships with the FRG to ensure that everyone's needs are met.

Notes from the Battalion Commander

My family and I are delighted to be back in Texas. We appreciate the "Texas size" welcome we received from everyone in the battalion. It is great to see old friends and we look forward to a battalion of new ones.

The battalion had the first FRG Key Leaders meeting in June. It was very successful and a great event. I would like to personally thank Cristy McLean, the Brigade FRG assistant, for her participation and help. In the coming months, we will continue to have FRG key leader meetings as well as company FRG meetings. Beth and I would like to attend the company FRG meetings to meet everyone and answer any questions you may have. Very busy and exciting times lay ahead and I look forward to experiencing them with you all.

To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding



Next Issue: In the next issue we will meet the FRG leaders, go over July's training, and talk about services that will be available to you leading up to and during deployment.